



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Historic Light Station Information RHODE ISLAND

Note: Much of the following historical information and lists of keepers was provided through the courtesy of Jeremy D'Entremont and his website on New England lighthouses.

BEAVERTAIL LIGHT

CONANICUT ISLAND/NARAGANSETT BAY ENTRANCE

Station Established: 1749; rebuilt 1753; rebuilt 1856

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1856

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1972

Deactivated: n/a

Foundation Materials: TIMBER/ROCK CRIB

Construction Materials: GRANITE

Tower Shape: SQUARE

Height: 45-feet; height of focal plane 68-feet

Markings/Pattern: NATURAL W/ BLACK LANTERN

Characterisitc: Flashes white light every six seconds

Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED

Original Lens: THIRD ORDER, FRESNEL 1856

Foghorn: Horn one blast every 30 seconds (three second blast)

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- 1749: This was the third lighthouse to be built in the United States.
- 1779: Conanicut Island had already gained fame from its association with the privateer, Captain William Kidd, during the late 1600s when Captain Kidd used the island as a hideout. During the Revolutionary War, the British burned the lighthouse when they left the area in 1779; the rubblestone tower survived the burning, but it was not fully repaired and back in operation until 1790. During the mid-1800s, the station had a true one-horse power fog signal; whenever the fog set in, the keeper walked his horse on a treadmill which operated a pump to provide pressure to the horn.



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

- 1856: It is the third lighthouse on the site. The original optic in the 1856 square granite tower was a third-order Fresnel lens; it was replaced with a fourth-order Fresnel lens in 1899. The fourth-order lens was retired in 1991. It is currently equipped with a modern plastic lens (DCB 24).
- 1938: The station was heavily damaged during the hurricane of 1938, but the tower survived.
- The station was used for numerous fog signal experiments; signals tested included bells, horns, whistles, and trumpets, which were mounted on the foundation of the 18th century tower.
- [Note to CCUSLHS Editor: There is a disagreement in the current light and its characteristic. It ranges from a fourth-order lens flashing a white signal (Rhode Island lights web site @ <http://zuma.lib.utk.edu/lights/ri4.html>); to flashing white "6s" with fourth-order lens on display in the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum (per *America's Atlantic Coast Lighthouses, A Traveler's Guide*, 2nd Edition); to fourth-order lens flashes green light (per *Northern Lighthouses*, by Bruce Roberts and Ray Jones). Current status, as indicated above, is according to the *Light List*, Vol. 1, Atlantic Coast, 1999.]

BLOCK ISLAND (NORTH) LIGHT

SANDY POINT/NORTH END BLOCK ISLAND

Station Established: 1829; rebuilt 1837, 1857, & 1867

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1867

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1955

Deactivated: 1970-1989

Foundation Materials:

Construction Materials: GRANITE/WOOD

Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL ON DWELLING ROOF

Height: 55-feet; height of focal plane 61-feet

Markings/Pattern: BROWN

Characteristics: Flashing white light every 5 seconds

Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL

Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1867

Foghorn: None

CHARACTERISTIC: Fixed white light, fifth order fresnel, range is 11 nautical miles

FOGHORN:

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

- 1829: The original lighthouse and its 1837 replacement consisted of twin towers; they were both washed away into the sea.
- 1857: The 1857 tower, which was moved further inland, was destroyed by fire.
- 1867: The original optic in the 1867 tower was a fourth-order Fresnel lens, which was placed on display at the Interpretive Center when it was deactivated and replaced by an automated offshore beacon.
- 1907: In February 1907 the steamer *Larchmont* ran into the schooner *Henry Knowlton* just off the northwest coast of Block Island. Only 19 of the 150 passengers and crew aboard the *Larchmont* survived in the freezing waters of Block Island Sound. The *Henry Knowlton* also sank but the crew managed to row to safety near the Watch Hill Lighthouse several miles to the northwest.
- 1996: In 1996 the original lens was returned to the light tower and North Light was re-commissioned as an active lighthouse, replacing the offshore beacon.

BLOCK ISLAND (SOUTHEAST) LIGHT

Location: MOHEGAN BLUFFS/BLOCK ISLAND

Station Established: 1875

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1875

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1990

Deactivated: 1990-1994

Foundation Materials: GRANITE/CONCRETE/BRICK

Construction Materials: RED BRICK

Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL PYRAMIDAL ATTACHED TO DUPLEX

Height: 52-feet; height of focal plane 258-feet

Markings/Pattern: NATURAL W/BLACK LANTERN

Characteristics: flashing green light every 5 seconds

Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED

Original Lens: FIRST ORDER, FRESNEL 1875

Foghorn: Horn one blast every 30 seconds (3-second blast)

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- 1856: Congress appropriated \$9,000 to build the lighthouse in 1856; however, the Lighthouse Board spent the money to rebuild the Block Island North Lighthouse on a site further inland after the 1837 lighthouse was swept into the sea.
- 1872: Subsequently, President Grant signed the congressional appropriation bill in 1872 to build the station.



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

- 1875: Block Island Southeast Light was first lighted on February 1, 1875. The original optic was a first-order Fresnel lens with four circular wicks feeding on whale oil.
- 1880: In 1880 this optic was replaced by a single kerosene-fed lamp inside a modified first-order classical lens that rotated on a bath of mercury and was driven by weight powered clock work that had to be rewound every four hours.
- 1990: The light was deactivated by the Coast Guard in 1990 and transferred its mission to a beacon placed on a nearby steel tower.
- 1993: In 1993 the 2,000-ton lighthouse was moved about 300 feet back from the eroding cliffs. The Fresnel lens was removed from the tower for the move. However, due to the potential hazard caused by the mercury float of this lens, it was decided not to reinstall and re-light it. It was replaced with Cape Lookout's original first-order lens, which had been on display at the Coast Guard's Support Center in Portsmouth, Virginia. The original Block Island lens is on display in the museum. The same firms that moved Cape Hatteras Lighthouse – International Chimney Corp. and Expert Movers of Maryland, carried out the move of the Southeast Lighthouse.

BRENTON REEF LIGHT

Location: ENTRANCE TO NARRAGANSETT BAY, APPROXIMATELY TWO MILES SOUTHWEST OF BRENTON POINT.

Station Established: 1875 (AS A LIGHTSHIP STATION)

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1962 (OFFSHORE LIGHT TOWER)

Operational: No

Automated: Yes, originally constructed as an automated station.

Deactivated: 1989, replaced by a lighted buoy.

Foundation Materials: Four cross-braced steel legs, made of 30-inch steel pipe, extending 25 feet into the bed rock beneath the ocean floor.

Construction Materials: Steel.

Tower Shape: Square; a six-foot tower rose from the deck, itself 81-feet above the ocean's surface, supported

a white 1.2 million candlepower beacon with a visibility range of 15 miles.

Markings/Pattern: Painted red (porcelainized fire red similar to coloring of the lightship the tower replaced),

with white lettering "BRENTON" on all four sides. Legs were illuminated at night.

Original Lens: Crouse Hinds, Double Drum Double Ended DCE-36 Airways Beacon.

Characteristic: Group Flashing White, two flashes every 10 seconds

Fog Signal: Two Diaphragm-type Leslie Typhones.



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Fog Signal Characteristic: Group of three-second blasts every 60 seconds, baffled from the Newport area.

Radio Beacon: Class D

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- Construction on the "tower-type deep-water off-shore light structure," which replaced the former lightship station of the same name, began in May 1961. The station's original construction cost was approximately \$500,000. It was built in about 78 feet of water. Power was supplied via submarine cable from Beavertail Light Station.
- The light was placed in operation on 28 September 1962.
- The Coast Guard first suggested demolishing the tower in 1983 due to the high cost of keeping it operational. The tower was spared due to the America's Cup Race being held in the area.
- 1989: March 1 the Coast Guard announced that it would discontinue use of the light and planned to "remove the deteriorating light tower over the next several years." It was to be replaced with a lighthouse buoy equipped with an electronic horn and radar beacon. The supporting legs of the tower were badly corroded and repair or replacement costs were considered prohibitive. The tower itself was dismantled in 1992 (?) and on 8 January 1993 the scrap was sunk off Long Island, New York, to create the Shinnecock artificial reef.

BRISTOL FERRY LIGHT

Location: STRAIT BETWEEN MOUNT HOPE AND NARRAGANSETT BAYS

Station Established: 1846

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1855

Operational? NO

Automated? YES 1928

Deactivated:

Foundation Materials:

Construction Materials: BRICK

Tower Shape: SQUARE WITH FAUX LANTERN

Height: 34-feet

Markings/Pattern: WHITE

Characteristics: Fixed red light

Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED

Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1855

Foghorn: None



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- The first lighthouse at the confluence of the Mount Hope River and Narragansett Bay was a short wooden tower that was operated as a private aid to navigation.
- 1855: The present lighthouse is a brick house with an attached 28-ft. tall brick tower capped with a wooden deck and lantern. The light was established on October 4, 1855, using a sixth-order classical lens and a whale oil lamp.
- 1902: This optic was replaced in 1902 with an electrified fifth-order Fresnel lens.
- 1916: The tower was raised 6 FT. to its present height in 1916 to accommodate a cast-iron lantern room removed from the old Roundout Lighthouse on the Hudson River.
- 1927: In 1927 the Bristol Ferry Light was discontinued and replaced by a steel skeleton tower; three years later this automatic light was discontinued after it was made obsolete with the building of the Mount Hope Bridge.
- 1928: The government removed the lantern room and sold the property in 1928; it has remained in private hands since then.
- 1996: The latest owners (since 1996) installed a new, faux lantern room containing an automatic light that comes on for two hours each evening.
- 1999: As of December 1999, the lighthouse was again up for sale with an asking price of \$419,000.

BULLOCK'S POINT LIGHT

Location: AT THE POINT OF THE SHOAL MAKING OFF SOUTHWESTERLY FROM BULLOCK POINT, EASTERLY SIDE OF THE CHANNEL OF PROVIDENCE RIVER

Station Established: 1872

Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1876

Operational: No

Automated: N/A

Deactivated: 1938

Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: White dwelling, with gable roof, from the middle of which rises a square tower, surmounted by a black lantern with black railings. The structure stands on a rectangular granite pier.

Height: 35-feet

Original lens: Sixth Order, Fresnel

Characteristic: Fixed red

Fog Signal: None



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

CASTLE HILL LIGHT

Location: NARRAGANSETT BAY EAST PASSAGE

Station Established: 1890

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1890

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1957

Deactivated: n/a

Foundation Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS

Construction Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS

Tower Shape: CONICAL

Markings/Pattern: WHITE TOP/GRANITE BOTTOM/BLACK LANTERN

Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE

Original Lens: FIFTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1890

CONANICUT ISLAND LIGHT (OLD)

Location: NORTH END OF CONANICUT ISLAND

Station Established: 1886

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1886

Operational? NO

Automated? YES 1933

Deactivated: 1933

Foundation Materials:

Construction Materials: WOOD

Tower Shape: SQUARE WITHOUT LANTERN

Markings/Pattern: RED W/WHITE TRIM

Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED

Original Lens: FIFTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1891

CONIMICUT SHOAL LIGHT

Location: PROVIDENCE HARBOR/NARRAGANSETT BAY

Station Established: 1868

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1883

Operational? YES

Automated? YES 1966

Deactivated: n/a



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Foundation Materials: CAST IRON/GRANITE CAISSON
Construction Materials: CAST IRON
Tower Shape: CONICAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1868

DUTCH ISLAND LIGHT

Location: DUTCH ISLAND/NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1826
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1857
Operational? NO
Automated? YES 1947
Deactivated: 1979
Foundation Materials: SURFACE ROCK
Construction Materials: BRICK
Tower Shape: SQUARE/ORIG. ATTACHED TO DWELLING
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1857

GULL ROCKS LIGHT

Location: ON GULL ROCKS, NORTHERLY ENTRANCE TO NEWPORT HARBOR,
NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1887
Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit: 1928
Operational: No
Automated: 1960
Deactivated: Yes, 1969
Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: Wedge-shaped wooden building, shingled, natural
color, with truncated gable ends. Replaced by a skeleton tower in 1928.
Height: 33-feet
Original lens: Lens lantern
Characteristic: Fixed white (E.1't); Fixed red (W. 1't)
Fog Signal: Bell struck by machinery every 5 seconds



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

HOG ISLAND SHOAL LIGHT

Location: EAST PASSAGE NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1886
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1901
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1964
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: CAST IRON/GRANITE CAISSON
Construction Materials: CAST IRON
Tower Shape: CONICAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE TOWER ON BLACK BASE "SPARK PLUG"
Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: FIFTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1901

IDA LEWIS ROCK LIGHT (FORMERLY LIME ROCK)

Location: INNER NEWPORT HARBOR
Station Established: 1854
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1854
Operational? NO
Automated? YES 1927
Deactivated: 1927
Foundation Materials:
Construction Materials: BRICK
Tower Shape: SQUARE ATTACHED TO SIDE OF BUILDING
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED
Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1854

NAYATT POINT LIGHT

Location: NAYATT POINT/PROVIDENCE RIVER MOUTH
Station Established: 1828
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1856



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Operational? NO
Automated? NO
Deactivated: 1868
Foundation Materials:
Construction Materials: BRICK
Tower Shape: SQUARE
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK TRIM
Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1863

NEWPORT HARBOR (GOAT ISLAND) LIGHT

Location: GOAT ISLAND/NEWPORT HARBOR ENTRANCE
Station Established: 1824
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1865
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1923
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: GRANITE BREAKWATER
Construction Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL (ORIG. ATTACHED TO HOUSE)
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL

PLUM BEACH LIGHT

Location: WEST PASSAGE/NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1897
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1899
Operational? NO
Automated? UNK
Deactivated: 1941
Foundation Materials: SUB TYPE CAST IRON CAISSON
Construction Materials: CAST IRON/CONCRETE
Tower Shape: "SPARK PLUG"/CONICAL ON CYLINDRICAL. BASE
Markings/Pattern: WHITE ON BLACK BASE



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1899

POINT JUDITH LIGHT

Location: WEST SIDE OF NARRAGANSETT BAY ENTRANCE
Station Established: 1810
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1857
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1954
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS
Construction Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL CONICAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE LOWER/BROWN UPPER W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1857

POMHAM ROCKS LIGHT (OLD)

Location: PROVIDENCE RIVER
Station Established: 1871
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1871
Operational? NO
Automated? YES 1974
Deactivated: 1974
Foundation Materials: STONE
Construction Materials: WOOD
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL ON SQUARE HOUSE
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN & RED ROOF
Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1871

POPLAR POINT LIGHT



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Location: WICKFORD HARBOR
Station Established: 1831
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1831
Operational? NO
Automated? NO
Deactivated: 1882
Foundation Materials:
Construction Materials: WOOD
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK TRIM
Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED
Original Lens: 8 LAMPS, 14.5" REFLECTORS

PRUDENCE ISLAND (SANDY POINT) LIGHT

Location: EAST SIDE SANDY POINT/NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1852
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1823
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1961
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: NATURAL/EMPLACED
Construction Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE TOWER W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FIFTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1852

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- In 1862 a white octagonal tower for a lighthouse was built on Sandy Point on the east side of Prudence Island, R. I. With the tower was built a keeper's dwelling.
- During the terrible September hurricane of 1938, five persons, including the wife of the lighthouse keeper, were carried out to sea and drowned, when the dwelling house on the lighthouse reservation was swept away by the savage fury of the tropical gale. The keeper was also thrown into the sea, but another wave swept him back ashore. The light itself is only 28 feet above water and is visible for 10 miles, flashing green every 6 seconds. The light is now unwatched, being a 1,400-candlepower fourth-order electric. A bell renders one stroke every 15 seconds during fog.



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

ROSE ISLAND LIGHT

Location: NORTH OF NEWPORT HARBOR
Station Established: 1870
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1870
Operational? YES
Automated? YES
Deactivated: 1971-1992
Foundation Materials: MASONRY
Construction Materials: WOOD
Tower Shape: OCTAGONAL
Markings/Pattern: WHITE TOWER ON DWELLING
Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1870

SABIN POINT

Location: PROVIDENCE RIVER NEAR PROVIDENCE, RI
Station Established: 1872
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: ??
Operational? NO
Automated? UNKNOWN
Deactivated: 1968
Foundation Materials: STONE
Construction Materials: STONE, WOOD
Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: SIXTH ORDER, FRESNEL
Fog Signal: YES

SAKONNET LIGHT

Location: LITTLE CORMORANT ROCK/SAKONNET RIVER
Station Established: 1884
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1884
Operational? NO



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Automated? UNK
Deactivated: 1955
Foundation Materials: CONCRETE/IRON CAISSON ON ROCK
Construction Materials: CAST IRON W/BRICK LINING
Tower Shape: CONICAL ON CYLINDRICAL BASE
Markings/Pattern: WHITE ON BLACK BASE
Relationship to Other Structure: INTEGRAL
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1884

WARWICK LIGHT

Location: WARWICK NECK/NARRAGANSETT BAY
Station Established: 1827
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1932
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1985
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: REINFORCED CONCRETE (1939)
Construction Materials: CAST IRON
Tower Shape: CYLINDRICAL W/OCT LANTERN & BASE
Markings/Pattern: WHITE W/BLACK LANTERN
Relationship to Other Structure: SEPARATE
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1856

WATCH HILL LIGHT

Location: FISHERS ISLAND SOUND EAST APPROACH
Station Established: 1808
Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: 1857
Operational? YES
Automated? YES 1986
Deactivated: n/a
Foundation Materials: GRANITE BLOCKS
Construction Materials: GRANITE W/BRICK INTERIOR
Tower Shape: SQUARE
Markings/Pattern: NATURAL W/WHITE LANTERN AND RED ROOF
Relationship to Other Structure: ATTACHED
Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL 1857



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

WHALE ROCK LIGHT

Location: WEST PASSAGE OF NARRAGANSETT BAY

Station Established: 1882

Year Current Tower(s) First Lit: n/a

Operational? NO; COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY A HURRICANE IN 1938

Automated? n/a

Deactivated: n/a

Foundation Materials: BEDROCK; LOWER PART OF CAISSON STRUCTURE FILLED WITH CONCRETE

Construction Materials: CAST IRON

Tower Shape: CAISSON

Markings/Pattern:

Relationship to Other Structure: n/a

Original Lens: FOURTH ORDER, FRESNEL

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

- This caisson lighthouse was destroyed by a hurricane on 21 September 1938. Walter B. Eberle, a U.S. Navy veteran and the first assistant keeper of the light was at his station when the lighthouse was completely swept away. His body was never recovered. The head keeper was ashore at the time and was unable to return to his station due to the severity of the storm.
-

WICKFORD HARBOR LIGHT

Location: ON OLD GAY ROCK, SOUTHERLY SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO WICKFORD HARBOR, WESTERN PASSAGE OF NARRAGANSETT BAY

Station Established: 1882

Year Current / Last Tower(s) First Lit:

Operational: No

Automated: N/A

Deactivated: 1930

Tower Shape / Markings / Pattern: White square tower and attached dwelling on a red iron pier; lantern, black

Height: 42-feet

Original lens: Fifth Order, Fresnel



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Characteristic: Fixed white

Fog Signal: Bell struck by machinery every 20 seconds
